



## Wheelchair Accessibility: Simulation

Est. Time: 1.5 Hours

### Objective

To gain a better understanding of the challenges encountered by individuals who use wheelchairs, and possible accommodations that can be provided to them.

### Overview

Individuals who use wheelchairs typically find that many parts of their daily routine require adaptation or adjustment. This activity gives teachers and students the opportunity to experience what a student who uses a wheelchair might encounter when he or she attends school. Possible accommodations and other considerations to support a student's success can be brainstormed. (Note: Activities may need to be modified if professional development activities are not conducted at a school site).

### Activity (For Professional Development Settings)

Borrow several wheelchairs from a local hospital or medical center. Split teachers into teams and ask them to explore their school. Each team should attempt at least three of the following:

1. Enter the school from the bus drop-off point and go to a designated homeroom class. Sit at a student desk and pretend to take notes from the board.
2. Go through the cafeteria line. When you have your tray, sit down at a table and eat.
3. Check out a book from the library.
4. Use the rest room; be sure to wash your hands before leaving the lavatory.
5. Drink from the water fountain.
6. Look up a book in the library's catalog system. Locate that book and check it out.
7. Go to the playground and play five minutes of four-square, basketball, or softball. Take note of what other activities you can do on the playground.
8. (For middle- or high school settings) Leave your homeroom, move to your locker, and then go to a designated second-period class within the allotted time for passing periods.



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### Questions/Discussion Topics

1. What were some of the things that were most difficult for you?
2. Were there any situations that were easier than you expected? Please describe them.
3. What unexpected situations did you encounter?
4. What were some creative solutions that you came up with for challenging situations?
5. How were other members of your team able to help you?
6. Having completed this activity, what are some things that you will now keep in mind?
7. Describe an “Aha!” moment that you experienced during this activity.

### Activity (For College Courses)

Borrow several wheelchairs from a local hospital or medical center. Split the students into teams and ask them to explore their campus. One important rule for teams is that they cannot “curb jump” but rather must use designated curb cuts in order to reach their destinations. Each team should attempt at least one of the following:

- Go to the library. Find a copy of a designated article (identified by the course instructor).
- Go to the campus cafeteria, purchase something, and eat in the dining area.
- Use the rest room, making sure to wash hands before leaving the lavatory.
- Explore one of the multiple-story buildings on campus. Identify the best and worst options for entering and exiting the building.
- Go to one of the campus computer labs. Using one of the computers, check out the IRIS Center Website (<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>).
- Travel from class to the instructor’s office, in case there is ever a need for a meeting later in the semester.

### Questions/Discussion Topics

Please use the Questions/Discussion Topics at the top of this page.